

INCOMPLETE OBEDIENCE

Joshua 17:12-13

Incomplete obedience will rob you of your possessions in Christ. Remember...**When God speaks...what you do next shows what you truly believe about God.** Obedience is when you do *what* God has told you to do...in the *way* He has instructed you to do it...*when* He tells you to do it. Incomplete obedience is working *for* the Father. It's *doing something other than what God has told you to do*...or at best, you did *what* He says to do, but you do it *your own way*...in *your own timing*. Remember God's command to **Israel in Deuteronomy 20:16-18**.

“Only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the Lord your God.”

~Deuteronomy 20:16-18

The result of their **incomplete obedience**: God is still with **Israel**...but:

“Now the Lord was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country; but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had iron chariots...But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day...But Manasseh did not take possession of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; so the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. It came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely. Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them. Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labor. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob. So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out. Naphtali did not drive out

the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became forced labor for them. Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley.”

~Judges 1:19, 21, 27-34

Three things led to their incomplete obedience:

I. They did not obey because of **INDOLENCE**:

Indolence...means *a mind that is against work or exertion*. A mind set or a mentality that is *against work*...*lazy*. Ultimately this mentality will be manifested in being *lazy when dealing with sin*.

This section and the one recording **Caleb's** request (**Joshua 14:6-15**) are very similar...but their outlooks were very different. **Caleb's** request was motivated by *faith*...whereas the remaining tribes of **Israel** were *fearful*. They were *afraid of work*...they were *afraid of the Canaanites*. They lacked *faith*. They had forgotten what God has said to **Joshua** before they ever crossed the **Jordan River** and entered to possess the land of **Canaan**.

“No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God gives you rest and will give you this land’.”

~Joshua 1:5-9, 13

Indolence is when you *do just enough to get by*...just enough to convince yourself that you are a *good person* in the eyes of God...just enough to convince yourself that you have *obeyed* God.

II. They would not obey God because of IMMATURITY:

Joshua 17:12...The sons of Manasseh could not take possession of the cities because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. They were *incomplete* in their willing to *obey* God...they were only willing to *compromise*. They weren't willing to drive the Canaanites out completely. They were *immature* in their *faith* because they were *immature* in *knowing God's Word*. They didn't *obey* because they didn't *trust* God...they lacked *faith*.

Joshua 17:14-18...The children of Joseph did not *eliminate* the Canaanites in their territory but *put them under force labor*. And then they complained about not having enough land. They didn't have enough land because the Canaanites continued to inhabit the land with them. **Joshua** suggested that they *clear trees* and *settle in the forested hill country*.

Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the Lord has thus far blessed?" (**vs. 14**)...The voice of this passage is one of a *belligerent, immature complaint...an expectant spirit...an immature attitude...whining*.

The descendants of Joseph complained that their allotment was too small in light of their large population. But with *tact* and *firmness* Joshua challenged them to first *clear the trees*...then *drive out* the Canaanites. Then they could settle in the forested hill country.

Go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself (vs. 15)...work! This was not what they wanted to hear. They wanted more land given to them.

You shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong (vs. 18)...Even though they have **chariots of iron and are strong**...God continues to remind them that *they are strong* and that *He has given them this land*.

III. They could not obey because of their INABILITY:

When they *did not*...later they *could not*.

"But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers."

~Joshua 16:10

"But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land."

~Joshua 17:12

What God had done through them previously...because of their **incomplete obedience**...He later *did not* do through them...drive out the Canaanites. They became a **thorn in their side**.

"And as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you'."

~Judges 2:2-3

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **Complete obedience is essential to receiving God's best and His blessing.** Only Joshua and Caleb *followed the Lord God fully*...only Joshua and Caleb were *completely obedient* in following God's Word in *entering* and *occupying* the Promised Land.

Jesus was absolutely and totally obedient to the Father...committed to doing His will.

- **Absolute surrender is necessary to coming under the Lordship of Christ.** *He is either Lord of all...or He isn't Lord at all!* When we surrender and make Jesus Lord, He begins to conform us into His image.

James, Jude, Peter, and Paul...all acknowledged themselves as *bondservants* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Incomplete obedience develops strongholds in your spiritual life.** These strongholds eventually will lead to *sin* which will ultimately *encumber you* and *entangle you...hold you in bondage*. Scripture says that these strongholds end up *causing trouble* which in the end *defiles many* (Hebrews 12:1, 15).

"...Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."

~Hebrews 12:1, 15